

RESOLUTION FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA
ESTABLISHING A POLICY ON PERSISTENT, BIOACCUMULATIVE TOXINS
AND THEIR EFFECTS ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

R-2002-377

Whereas, a group of pollutants known as Persistent, Bioaccumulative Toxins (PBTs) are toxic, persistent in the environment and accumulate in the food chain, and these characteristics, along with the ubiquity of PBTs in the worldwide environment, pose public and environmental health risks;

Whereas, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) has established a list of 12 priority PBTs, including dioxins, PCBs, mercury and its compounds, lead and others, some of which have been linked to increased cancer risk, harm to children, infants and the unborn, disorders of the immune, developmental, endocrine, hormonal, and reproductive systems, as well as other human health problems;

Whereas, US EPA's June 2000 reassessment of dioxins health effects estimates that the general public's exposures are near levels that may cause adverse health effects;

Whereas, County residents who consume fish from the Bay are at additional risk, as PBT contamination in fish reaches health advisory levels throughout the San Francisco Bay, and San Francisco Bay fish consumers are predominantly low income and people of color;

Whereas, low income people and people of color are more likely to live near a source of PBT pollution;

Whereas, workers often face disproportionately high exposures to toxic substances found in their work places;

Whereas, Certain PBTs have been linked to adverse effects on water quality and aquatic ecosystems, and the San Francisco Bay is listed by the US EPA as impaired by PBTs;

Whereas, PBTs have been detected in measurements of treated waste water discharged from pollution sources in the Bay Area and state and local water quality agencies may, as a result, come under a federal mandate to implement new local controls of these pollution sources;

Whereas, sources of new PBT pollution are varied and include industrial and commercial processes and products as well as residential activities and certain facilities that are PBT sources are of special concern for neighboring communities;

Whereas, other PBTs exist whose chemistry, sources, concentrations and health effects are as yet poorly understood or unknown, which may add to the toxic health effects of US EPA's priority PBTs, and for which no regulatory standards exist;

Whereas, respected expert associations and agencies including the California Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the United Nations Environment Program, the International Joint Commission of the U.S. and Canadian governments, and The California Water Resources Control Board have agreed upon the need to reduce or eliminate PBTs in the environment;

Whereas, pollution prevention is recognized as the strategy most highly protective of public and environmental health and most effective in reducing and eliminating releases of PBTS, and cost-effective pollution prevention options as well as environmentally preferable treatment practices and technologies exist for many PBT sources;

Whereas, in 1991, the County of Alameda has expressed its support for such pollution prevention activities through the establishment of a County Service Area to address lead in the form of lead-based paint hazards;

Whereas, PBT exposures can be reduced through procurement, design, operation, work practice and disposal decisions that reduce or eliminate releases of PBTs;

Whereas, exposure to PBTs is a clear threat to public and environmental health, local PBT contamination has a disproportionate impact on children, low-income and minority communities, PBT exposure affects all residents of the County of Alameda and the Bay Area; and pollution prevention strategies exist that can be implemented by County government and by others within the County of Alameda;

Now Therefore, be it:

Resolved, that the County of Alameda considers PBT pollution prevention a high priority for action to protect public and environmental health, and intends by this resolution to encourage the reduction and where feasible, the elimination of PBT emissions; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda intends to implement PBT pollution prevention practices wherever practicable in County operations and will promote such pollution prevention practices in County-based facilities and health care institutions, other government facilities, businesses and households in the County; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda establishes the Alameda County PBT Committee with the mission to advise and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and to the agencies on PBT pollution prevention policies and practices; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the PBT Committee shall be chaired by the Director or designee of the Environmental Health Department and composed of the Directors or designees of the Public Works Agency, General Services Agency, the Fire Department and other appropriate county offices, and shall seek the participation of the Alameda County Medical Center, the Alameda County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, which shall meet as needed and shall seek the participation of stakeholder groups; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda will work with other government agencies, industry and the public on pollution prevention efforts to protect environmental and public health and to implement plans to reduce PBT releases at their sources; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda is committed to assisting businesses in obtaining technical and financial assistance for the reduction and where feasible, the elimination of PBTs; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda is committed to protecting workers' jobs and therefore will pursue PBT reduction practices that do not cause workers to become unemployed and relocated; and be it

Further **Resolved**, that the County of Alameda forwards this resolution, and encourages other Bay Area counties and cities to adopt a similar resolution.

ALAMEDA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, January 29, 2001

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES- Supervisors Carson, Lai-Bitker, Miley, Steele, & President Haggerty - 5

NOES- None

ABSENT- None

ABSTENTION- Non

ATTEST

R. Bailey, Deputy Clerk of the Board of Supervisors,
County of Alameda, California

Approved as to Form by

Tamara M. Wiggins

County Counsel